

TIMES-PICAYUNE

New Orleans, Louisiana

October 5, 1960

Witness Tells of Lung Cancer

Says Various Ills Could Cause Fatal Malady

The major witness who testified Tuesday in the cigarette-cancer case being tried in federal court said that the lung cancer which killed the man whose widow brought the suit could have been caused by a number of diseases which the plaintiff's husband had during his lifetime.

Dr. R. H. Rigdon, Galveston, Tex., a specialist in experimental pathology, said that Frank J. Lartigue "had many things connected with the changes which many people consider the cause of cancer."

He said that Lartigue's medical history showed that he suffered from influenza, tuberculosis, measles and syphilis. Influenza and tuberculosis produce inflammation of the lungs and these and the other two diseases have at times been connected to cancer formation.

The witness also said that the fact that Lartigue traveled over tarred and dirt roads during career as a salesman might have been a contributing factor. He cited a study made many years ago on this subject by a British researcher.

DENIES RATIO NARROWS

Dr. Rigdon denied that the ratio of lung cancer in men and women is narrowing as women smoke cigarettes more. He testified that he studied this problem and has come to the conclusion that there is a tremendous variation in the ratio.

"My opinion is that before 1900, there was a ratio of three or four males with lung cancer to one female and in the years from 1950 to 1953 it was five or six males to one female. There has been a slight increase in the males but not a terrific change," he asserted. He said that he expects the gap to widen slightly in the years to come.

Witnesses who testified for the plaintiff testified that Lartigue's cancer was a "primary lung cancer," or one which originated in that organ. Dr. Rigdon said that the lung is a common place for a tumor to go from another part of the body and that in many cases they are erroneously diagnosed as "primary."

Regarding the alleged increase in the incidence of lung cancer, the pathologist said that he is suspicious that there really is no tremendous increase but that "we are seeing more cases and the population in the age bracket where lung cancer occurs is increasing." Most lung cancer is found in persons over 50, he said.

TELLS OF EXPERIMENTS

The witness claimed that the rise in the incidence began long before cigarette smoking became popular and that "everytime a new technique comes out for the examination of the chest the incidence of lung cancer goes up."

He said that he did not consider smoking related to lung cancer and gave as one of his major reasons for the opinion that there has been no experimental evidence to show the production of lung cancer in any experimental animal.

He claimed that there is "more talk now about air pollution as a result of the Los Angeles smog."

Under cross-examination by Melvin M. Belli, an attorney for Mrs. Victoria St. Pierre Lartigue, the plaintiff in the case, Dr. Rigdon said that he has been conducting experiments with ducks at the University of Texas and that he has been unable to produce tumors in the ducks' tracheas by painting them with tobacco products.

DENIES TOBACCO GRANTS

He denied that he is receiving grants from tobacco companies to make the experiments, but said that the university gets money for their laboratories.

The doctor also testified that

he did not consider statements made public by the American Cancer Society, the United States Public Health Service, and the British ministry of health on the relationship of smoking with lung cancer as "conclusive."

"Investigations have been made as early as 1900 as to the relationship of smoking and lung cancer but nobody got hot and bothered about it until about 1950," he asserted.

He was asked by Belli if he would change his opinion as to the possible causative effect of smog if he were shown a study of 8000 persons in Los Angeles who did not get lung cancer.

"And there is another study which shows different results. So, you pays your money and you takes your choice," Dr. Rigdon replied.

The only other witness called Tuesday was Dr. J. N. Ane, a radiologist and clinical professor of radiology at the Tulane university school of medicine.

Dr. Ane examined Lartigue's X-rays and pointed to the cancer from which he died as well as to several calcifications which he said indicated old inactive tuberculosis.

Two depositions taken by the defendants from witnesses prior to the trial were also read into

the record. They were the depositions of Dr. Charles W. Mayo of the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn., and Dr. Norman Ende, the pathologist who performed the autopsy on Lartigue.

DEPOSITIONS GIVEN

Dr. Mayo testified in his deposition that he does not feel that it has been established that smoking is the sole cause of lung cancer. He said that there are cases where it might be a contributing

cause.

Dr. Ende described the type of cancer from which Lartigue died and said in the deposition that it was classified in the autopsy report as a "squamous cell" cancer because that was the classification preferred by his superior at the Veterans Administration hospital in Houston, Tex., where Lartigue died.

He said that there was some evidence that it could have been designated as a "large cell undifferentiated" cancer. He said that he felt the cancer started in the lung but had no opinion as to whether or not it was caused by smoking.

The defendants who are being sued for \$150,000 by Mrs. Lartigue are the R. J. Reynolds Tobacco Company and the Liggett and Myers Tobacco Company.

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